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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to test the hypothesis that most persons will act differently as they process information and form impressions about another person when that person is familiar than when the other person is unfamiliar to them. The subjects were 79 undergraduate students enrolled in the basic communication course of a midwestern university during the summer session. In a previous study, two ethnic groups (English and German) had been identified as familiar and two groups (Walloons and Kashubs) had been identified as unfamiliar. A case study was devised whereby the ethnic target was presented as the subject of an interview. Three conditions were developed: a familiar ethnic identification, an unfamiliar ethnic identification, and no ethnic identification. Identical interviews were associated with the familiar, unfamiliar, and control targets. Three additional instruments were developed to measure hypotheses: an item selection task, a question task, and a personal impression task. Although results show that there is a difference in the amount of information generated from an ethnic target, it is uncertain how the subjects in the unfamiliar treatment condition actually regarded the unfamiliar target. (DF)

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Anticipation of Communication with Familiar and Unfamiliar Persons

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Anticipation of Communication with

Familiar and Unfamiliar Persons

Imagine that you are in the situation where you are about to meet a person for the first time. Prior to meeting the person you would probably anticipate what the person will be like. It is likely that you will begin your search for information about this person by attempting to find whether he/she possesses traits or characteristics with which you are already familiar. Your own familiarity with certain traits or characteristics used to label the person would create expectations about what the person is like, and subsequently, how you might act towards him/her.

Normally, we might initially attempt to anticipate what the person will be like from our repository of meanings associated with the trait labels we have selected. So in the case where we knew the person we were about to meet is a Russian, our previous first-hand experience with other Russians would influence our expectations of the new acquaintance. In the case where we have not previously interacted with a Russian, we may draw from second-hand references--what others have told us, what we have read, etc. Additionally, such second-hand sources of information may supplement or even supplant our own direct experiences.

Occasionally, we encounter situations where we have little or no previous reference to draw upon in formulating expectations of another person. If this is the case does our anticipation and initial behavior vary from those instances in which we are better prepared? Further, does our unfamiliarity in anticipating an encounter alter behavior?

The present study is directed toward answering these questions. It focuses on the nature of the intrapersonal processing which occurs before the anticipated encounter. It is the assumption of this study that most persons will act differently in the manner they process information and form impressions about another person when the other is familiar than when the other is unfamiliar to them.

The fundamental assumption underlying this study is that persons attempt to make meaningful their perceptions of others. Perceptions are understood not as cognitive reproductions of the anticipated other, but rather as an interpretation which the perceiver uses as an anticipatory scheme guiding his/her behavior towards another. Attempts at communication are seen as a form of behavior which is a directed response, with cognitive processes serving a mediational role between the reception of external stimuli and the enactment of intentional responses. The focus of this point of view is upon the creative/interpretive process through which information is made meaningful.

Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory provides a beginning point for anticipation of another's behavior. In his final corollary, the Sociality Corollary, Kelly notes that to the extent one person construes the construction processes of another, he may play a role in the social processes involving the other person. This line of thought implies that in order to communicate with another we must be able construct an approximation of the other person's construal of reality.

When anticipating communication with another, a person seeks to anticipate the other's constructs so that he/she might understand them and create conditions for incorporating them within his/her own construct system. Failure to successfully anticipate the other's construction of reality operates as does the failure to anticipate any event. When the anticipatory scheme fails, a person abansons it in preference of an alternative. As Kelly (1955, p. 136) concludes his dis-

cussion about the nature of communication, he notes:

> The nature of communication is itself a construct and, just as we let a construct represent that of which it is a construction, we let a communicated construct represent the personal construct of which it is a construction. The communicated construct is the construing of the person who "receives" it; one of its elements is the construct of the person who had it beforehand. The construct of the person from whom the communication takes place is real; so is the communicated construct, but the communicated construct is a construction of the original construct and hence not identical with it.

Communication becomes only a special sense in which a person employs constructs. The development of an anticipatory scheme prior to the actual encounter represents an attempt after meaning in intrapersonal communication which is "tested" against its confirmation or rejection in an interpersonal exchange. Delia (1976) has argued that we never directly experience another person, but rather that we construct an impression. He notes:

> The constructivist perspective implies directly that our understanding of other people is always in terms of images or impressions. The other is never a reflected reality. We can never apprehend another's intentions, inner qualities, or attitudes. Rather, in interpersonal perception the individual constructs an <u>impression</u> of the actions, qualities, or attitudes of the other through interpreting aspects of the other's appearance and behavior within particular cognitive dimensions. (p. 367)

Delia's perspective argues that perception of another consists both of representations of the other's behaviors and actions as well as dispositional qualities associated with them. The source of information about an "other" may consist either of observed instances or inferred attributes from reports about the other (Delia, 1976; 1977). Additionally, the impression may rely idiosyncratic or socially shared attributes (Delia, 1976). Sharing in Kelly's metaphor of "man as scientist," Delia concludes that perception is an "attempt after meaning," interposing an interpretive cognitive structure between physical sensation and conceptual understanding.

That humans use anticipatory schemes in preparing for interaction has largely been applied in explanations of stereotyping. Stewart et al. (1979), for example, explain stereotyping as a strategy to formulate a plan of expectations for dealing with information which is uncertain. Hamilton (1979) notes that stereotyping allows the reduction of the complexities of information to which a person is subjected. The individual copes with information through a process of categorization (Stewart et al., 1979; Snyder, 1981; Hamilton, 1979, 1981) which allows the person to anticipate the nature of the other person to be encountered. Furthermore, the anticipation of the other directs the behavior of the perceiver in the ensuing interaction. Snyder (1981) outlines this procedure as a four-step process:

> (1) perceivers anticipate their forthcoming interaction with targets in the light of available stereotypes; (2) these stereotypes guide the formation of scenario-like anticipations of what events are to appear as the interaction unfolds; (3) in these scenarios targets are imagined to behave in accord with stereotyped-based inferences and predictions about their attributes and behaviors; (4) these scenarios actively guide the perceiver's interactional strategy. (p. 200)

The importance of the process Snyder outlines for stereotyping is in its accounting for the relationship between (a) the cognitive process of association and anticipation and (b) the communication strategy the perceiver employs. Stereotypes are not simply cognitive structures. Rather, they create the conditions for the course of subsequent behavior. To the extent that one employs stereotypes as a normal process of categorizing events in anticipation of encounters with persons, stereotypes actively contribute to the forms of behavior associated with human communication.

Snyder, Tanke, and Berscheid (1977) note one effect of stereotypes as the tendency to overestimate the occurence of instances which confirm the stereotype. Tracing this tendency to what Kahneman and Tversky (1973) had labeled an "availability heuristic," they posit that to the extent a stereotype categorizes infor-

mation into patterns of familiarity, those categories, once engaged, become more available to the individual perceiver.

Hamilton (1979, 1981) expands the discussion of the influence of stereotypes in noting that the cognitive availability of certain preconceived categories of objects may create a perceptual bias to discount other pertinent associations which could be made; the other associations are discounted because of the reliance upon the more available alternatives. In other words, when confronted with a familiar case our perception may be drawn to those elements which are most conveniently available to us at the potential cost of disregarding other elements which may be as available as those selected.

One factor which appears to have salience across individuals is their familiarity with the person with whom they anticipate interaction. Support for this contention is provided by the greater recall associated with familiar target persons. Beach and Wertheimer (1961), for instance, found that subjects provided the greatest amount of information about targets with whom they were well acquainted. Fiske and Cox (1979) reported that subjects wrote more elaborate descriptions of persons well-known to them then less well-known acquaintances. Additionally, Fiske and Cox reported that well-known targets are more likely to be represented by more abstract personality elements while less well-known targets were described in relatively concrete terms. Supnick, cited in Crockett (1965) similarly found that children tended to represent friends through the description of their traits while more concrete behaviors were used in accounting for strangers. Supnick also reported that children would report more information about a friend than about a stranger (Scarlett, Press, and Crockett; 1971).

Hamilton, Katz, and Leirer (1980) account for the ease of retrievability of self-descriptive items in terms of the familiarity we have for ourselves. It is only a slight extension of this rationale to our ease of retrieval of information

about those with whom we are familiar. Bass (1981) reflecting on his previous analysis (1966) advanced two reasons for interaction and recall to increase as a function of the familiarity of group members; (1) members feel more secure in interacting with each other than with strangers and, (2) they can predict each other's actions.

In addition to personal familiarity of an acquaintance, other, socially-shared, types of familiarity exist. Hamilton (1979) notes that differential response to ethnic groups is not possible without prior categorization processes. Hamilton notes that stereotypes about ethnic groups tend to be socially-shared categorizations rather than idiosyncratic expressions. Similarly, Snyder (1981) proposed that well-known stereotypes about sex, age, religion, race, ethnicity, national origin, bodily appearance, sexual orientation, occupation, and social class exist. So while it may be necessary to distinguish between personal and social stereotypes on occasion (Stewart, et al., 1979), there is some basis for accepting there are some stereotypes which are commonly shared within population groups. Where these social stereotypes exist, generalizations may be drawn about their familiarity.

Given that distinctive items create a heightened level of salience for the perceiver, the question is whether familiarity generates distinctiveness for perceivers. Much of the previous research (Beach and Wertheimer, 1961; Fiske and Cox, 1979) have used subject-generated operationalizations of familiar and unfamiliar conditions. Such operationalizations may be tautological. There is a fair amount of evidence that persons will give a broader description of a familiar target than an unfamiliar one. Additionally, there seems to be an indication that the type of information generated about a familiar target person will be more abstract and personality oriented than the the descriptions ascribed to an unfamiliar target person.

Given that stereotyping appears to be a normal process by which persons

categorize information in anticipation of events, it would be expected that people from a familiar background would allow a perceiver to generate a more extensive description and a more abstract, personality-oriented description than would people who come from backgrounds unfamiliar to him/her.

What happens when there is no readily available stereotype in which to categorize the anticipated target. Except for those studies which asked subjects to think of someone who was not well-known to them, most research in impression formation has relied upon the operationalization of two available constructs already within the repertoire of the subjects. Given that the direction of research has supported the relationship between familiarity and the extensiveness of descriptions, it would seem that the next step would be to test whether the unfamiliarity of an anticipated target would change the way in which a person prepared to engage him/her.

A set of propositions may be stated which represent how familiarity operates in the anticipation of communication. They are stated in the following:

1. Persons anticipate interactions with others.
   - A. Anticipation of events results in a theory of the sequence of events.
   - B. Stereotypes operate to provide an anticipatory schema.
     1. Social stereotypes provide a shared anticipatory schema.
     2. Social stereotypes about a person provide a set of descriptive elements that will be expected of that person.
     3. Conversely, the absence of social stereotypes about a person from an unknown background yields relatively few descriptive elements.
     4. A large number of social stereotypes should result in the generation of a relatively large proportion of abstract, personality items.
     5. Conversely, the absence of stereotypes about a person from an unfamiliar background should result in the representation of that person with a greater proportion of concrete, behavioral elements.

From these propositions a set of working hypotheses has been derived for the present study. There are two main hypotheses, each of which has imbedded three sub-hypotheses:

Hypothesis$_1$: A person anticipating interaction with an "other" from a "familiar" will generate more "elements" than will a person anticipating an encounter with an "other" from an "unfamiliar" background.

Sub-hypothesis$_{11}$: A person anticipating interaction with a familiar "other" will seek more additional information than will a person anticipating interaction with an unfamiliar "other."

Sub-hypothesis$_{12}$: A person anticipating interaction with a familiar "other" will ask more questions than will a person anticipating interaction with an unfamiliar "other."

Sub-hypothesis$_{13}$: A person anticipating interaction with a familiar "other" will write a greater number of elements in his/her impression than will a person expecting an unfamiliar "other."

Hypothesis$_2$: In anticipating interaction with a familair other will qualitatively represent the other in proportionately more personality-related items while persons expecting an encounter with an unfamiliar other will represent the other with proportionately more behavior-related items.

Sub-hypothesis$_{21}$: The anticipated familiar encounter will be reflected in more personality-related items desired.

Sub-hypothesis$_{22}$: The anticipated familiar other will be asked more personality-related questions.

Sub-hypothesis$_{23}$: The anticipated familiar other will be represented by more personality-related elements in a written impression.

METHOD

A method of selecting familiar and unfamiliar targets was needed. Since ethnicity represents one socially-shared stereotype (Hamilton, 1979; Snyder, 1981), pilot tests were conducted to determine whether "familiar" and "unfamiliar" ethnic targets existed for subjects. From a list of forty-five European ethnic groups, pilot subjects isolated two ethnic groups which were generally familiar (English and German) and two which were generally unfamiliar (Kashubs and Walloons).[1] Based on the pilot study, it was determined that ethnicity constituted a valid construct for the operationalization of familiarity/unfamiliarity.

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[1]Pilot subjects (n=31) recognized and correctly identified German and English ethnic targets in 94% of cases (29 of 31). Similarly, Walloons (Belgian) could not be identified by 94% of subjects (2 of 31) while Kashubs (Polish) were not identified by any subjects.

Subjects

Subjects were seventy-nine (79) undergraduate students enrolled in the basic communication course of a Midwestern University during the summer semester. Students received class participation credit for their participation.

Independent Measures

Based on the pilot study results that certain ethnic targets were generally familiar (German and English) while others were unfamiliar (Kashub and Walloon), the task was to construct treatments which would focus subjects' attention upon their familiarity with the ethnic target. Previous research (Snyder and Uranowitz, 1978; Juhnke, 1980) found that alteration of a single or limited number of trait items in a stimulus description could alter subsequent impressions.

A case study was devised whereby the ethnic target was presented as the subject of an interview. Three conditions were developed. In the first condition (familiar) a familiar ethnic identification (German or English) was incorporated. In the second condition (Kashub or Walloon), an unfamiliar ethnic identification was incorporated. In a third condition (Control), all ethnic reference was excluded.

Identical interviews were associated with the familiar, unfamiliar, and control targets. The only difference among the stimulus sets was the ethnic identification attributed to the interviewee. In all conditions the interviewee was given the name "Stan." In addition to an initial ethnic identification made in the preface to the interview, "Stan" made three references to his ethnic background in the course of the familiar and unfamiliar interviews.

In summary, the independent measure consisted of three categories of familiarity: two familiar ethnic targets (German and English), two unfamiliar ethnic targets (Kashub and Walloon), and a control target (no ethnic identification). By varying the ethnic identification of the target reference, the idependent measure sought to determine whether such a manipulation could induce differential

responses among subject in their impressions of the targets.

Dependent Measures

It was hypothesized that subjects would process information differently when confronted with an anticipated encounter based on their familiarity with the target. It was expected that a familiar target would result in more total elements in their representation of the target as well as be qualitatively be oriented towards personality items in their representations. Unfamiliar targets were expected to result in fewer total elements in the subjects' representations as well as qualitatively more oriented to concrete behavioral items. Three instruments measured these hypotheses.

Item Selection Task

This measurement allowed subjects to select additional items of information about the target beyond those presented in the interview. Assuming the a familiar target engages a broader cognitive schema in the subject, it was expected that subjects in this condition would select a greater number of additional information items. On the other hand, the unfamiliar target would cause subjects to focus on a relatively few traits in an attempt to develop a core impression of the target.

The Item Selection Task consisted of forty-eight items of additional information about the subject. The forty-eight items were divided into two twenty-four item groups: a set of personality traits and a set of demographic items about the target. The personality traits were derived from the items generated by Passini and Norman (Passini and Norman, 1966; Norman, 1963). These items are found to have stable reference for subjects in previous studies.

The other twenty-four items consisted of ostensibly self-reported information provided by the target. These represented demographic information about the target such as "religion," "income," etc. The total forty-eight items were randomized in order, assigned a reference number, and listed on an "Index."

After reading the interview, subjects could obtain additional information

by selecting items listed in the index. The complete information was located in plastic sleeves located at the rear of their booklet. Subjects were told they could select as many additional items as they wished that they felt were necessary to form an "accurate" impression of the target. After selecting an information card from its plastic sleeve, subjects were to record the number of the item selected, return the card to its sleeve, and continue selecting items as long as the desired.

In all treatments the "Index" and the item descriptions contained on the cards were identical. Differences in the number of cards selected and the types of information selected (personality or concrete) would be inferred to have been caused by the operation of the target's ethnic familiarity to the subject.

Question Task

A second dependent measure allowed subjects to ask for additional information which was neither contained in the interview of the Item Selection Task. This was structured as an open-ended task. Subjects could write as many (or as few) questions they would ask about the target to help them form "a more accurate impression" of the target. These questions were generated before an encounter.

The subject questions were first counted to generate a score of total questions. It was expected that subjects who anticipated interaction with a familiar ethnic target would ask more questions than those anticipating interaction with an unfamiliar ethnic target. Second, independent raters executed a qualitative discrimination between the types of questions subjects wrote. They coded questions in four categories; a request for background information, a request for personality trait information, a request for both background and personality information, or a request for information which fit none of the preceding categories. It was expected that familiar targets would induce more requests for personality information while unfamiliar targets would induce more requests for background information.

Personal Impression Task

After completing the Question Task, subjects were given a "Personal Impression Form" on which they were asked to write "a brief description of the person's personality." Subjects were asked to write their impressions as though they were describing "Stan" to a friend.

The open-ended impressions were later rated by an independent group of raters. First, raters counted the total number of sentences written by each subject. The sentence was selected as the unit of analysis because it represented a complete thought on the part of the subject. It was expected that the familiar target would cause subjects to generate more extensive impressions because the familiarity with the target would engage more preconceptions held by the subjects.

Second, raters categorized the sentences into four categories. Sentences which represented an objective/demographic account or the target were coded as "Descriptive" information. Sentences which represented a personality evaluation of the target were coded "Evaluative" information. Those sentences which contained both "Descriptive" and "Evaluative" elements were coded as "Both," and sentences which fit none of the preceding categories were coded "Neither." It was expected that unfamiliar targets would generate more "Evaluative" elements than familiar targets.

Background Information

Two additonal instruments were administered at the conclusion of the dependent measures. The "Personal Perception Questionnaire" was designed to obtain validity checks on certain of the procedures and on the subjects' background knowledge of target ethnicity. The "Personal Background Inventory" was designed to obtain demographic information about the subjects and was not used for subsequent analysis.

General Procedures

Subjects were randomly assigned to the three independent conditions. Groups

of one to five participated in the study in a given session. Orientation information to the study was given in a group session and then individuals were segregated to complete the several tasks. After each subject in a session has completed the "Personal Background Inventory," he/she was given a debriefing statement on the study. A group debriefing session was then conducted providing additional information on the study and an opportunity for subjects to ask questions. The typical research session took forty-five minutes.

RESULTS

Limited support was obtained for each of the two main hypotheses. Primary analysis of the mixed design used a repeated measures analysis of variance with supplementary omega-square analysis to account for the proportion of variance. In the analysis, only sixty of the seventy-nine subjects were used. Sixteen subjects were excluded who were either foreign-born or minority students. These were excluded from the analysis because it could not be assumed that they would share in the cultural stereotypes of ethnic familiarity. Three other subjects were excluded irregularities in completing one or more of the instruments. The remaining sixty subjects were distributed equally across the three experimental conditions (Familiar, Unfamiliar, and Control ethnic target).

Item Selection Task

It was predicted that subjects receiving familiar target treatments would select a greater number of additional items of information than would unfamiliar and control conditions. It was further predicted that familiar target subjects would select more personality items than would unfamiliar target subjects. Conversely, subjects in the unfamiliar treatment were predicted to select more demographic items than would familiar treatment subjects.

While the total number of additional items selected was greater for the familiar target treatment, the repeated measures ANOVA indicates that the differ-

ence between familiar and unfamiliar treatments was not significant, F (2,57) = 0.65, $p > .25$. The mean scores for the total items selected is reported in Table 1.

Similarly, while familiar treatment subjects did select more personality items (M = 9.35) compared with their unfamiliar (M = 8.40) or control condition (M = 8.50) counterparts, the ANOVA results indicate this failed to obtain statistical significance, F (2,57) = 1.24, $p > .25$. The converse was also unsupported as unfamiliar target subjects choose fewer (M = 7.10) demographic items than did familiar target subjects (M = 9.15).

Table 1

TOTAL ITEMS SELECTED WITH PROPORTIONS

SELECTED BY TYPE

	Treatment Condition			
Variable	Unfamiliar Target	Familiar Target	Control Target	Mean
Total Items	15.50	18.50	14.65	16.22
Demographic Items	7.10	9.15	6.15	7.47
Personality Items	8.40	9.35	8.50	8.75

While not predicted, a main effect was obtained in which more personality were selected than demographic items. Repeated measures ANOVA indicated that a significant difference exists for the selection of item types, F (1,57) = 7.51, $p < .01$. An omega-square statistic indicates that this difference accounted for 2.42 percent of the total variance.

Two items from the "Person Perception Question" lend indirect support to the absence of an interaction effect of the item type preference by subject condi-

tion. Question #3 asked subjects to respond to the statement "Information about this person's personality traits was more helpful than information about this person's activities and preferences" (1 = Agree Totally; 7 = Disagree Totally). Differences in response by treatment condition would be expected here. The unfamiliar treatment would be expected to result in more disagreement relative to the familiar treatment. A one-way ANOVA indicates no significant differences among treatment groups, F (2,57) = 0.75, $p > .40$.

Item #6 on the Personal Perception Questionnaire also reflects on this result. The item asked, "Do you think that you would need additional information to form a satisfactory impression of this person?" (1 = Much Additional Information Needed; 7 = No Additional Information Needed). A desire for more additional information would tend to support the main effect that familiar target subjects form broader category expectations about the target and, hence, desire more information. However, one-way ANOVA indicated that there was no significant difference among subjects, F (2,57) = 0.74, $p. > .40$.

Question Task

It was predicted that familiar target subjects would ask more questions than the unfamiliar target counterparts. Further, it was predicted that familiar treatment subjects would ask more personality questions than would unfamiliar treatment subjects. Conversely, the unfamiliar condition would result in more background information questions.

For the analysis of subjects' questions, the coders' ratings were combined into a single rating for each question unit--a complete sentence or independent clause imbedded within a series of questions. The coders were blind to the conditions they were evaluating. Four hundred and thirty-eight question units were generated by the sixty subjects. In 321 cases (73.6%) the four coders were unanimous in their category choice. In eighty-two judgements (18.7%. three of the four coders agreed in their category choice. In twenty-three cases (5.3%), coders

split between two categories. (In this case a fifth coder was introduced as a "tie-breaker.") In twelve cases (2.4%), two coders agreed on a single category while the other coders each selected a different category. Composite rating were based on majority selections. Using Scott's pi as a coefficient of reliability, an acceptable level of intercoder reliability was obtained (pi = .71). Scott's pi (Scott, 1955; Holsti, 1968, 1969) provides a conservative estimate of intercoder reliability.

The first prediction, that familiar target subjects would ask more total questions than unfamiliar target subjects, was supported by the data. Subjects receiving a familiar treatment asked more questions ($\underline{M}$ = 9.50) than those receiving an unfamiliar treatment ($\underline{M}$ = 6.80) or control treatment ($\underline{M}$ = 6.50). Means for total questions and by type are reported in Table 2. Repeated measures ANOVA indicates that this difference is significant, $\underline{F}$ (2,57) = 4.99, $p < .01$. Omega-square analysis indicates that this difference accounts for 4.26% of variance.

The second prediction, that familiar target subjects would ask proportionally more personality questions was not supported. Neither was its converse that unfamiliar condition subjects would ask for more demographic information. ANOVA results indicate that the interaction of type of question by condition was not significant, F (2,57) = 0.69, $p > .25$.

Table 2

QUESTIONS ASKED BY CONDITION

	Treatment Condition			
Type of Question	Unfamiliar Target	Familiar Target	Control Target	Mean
Total Questions	6.80	9.50	6.50	7.60
Background	2.00	4.15	2.45	2.90
Personality	4.80	5.35	3.95	4.70

As with the Selection Task, however, a main effect was discovered for the question type. It appears that across all three conditions there was a significant difference in the representation of personality questions, F (1,57) = 15.23, $p < .001$. Omega-square analysis indicates that this difference accounted for 10.94% of variance.

In summary, the analysis of the data for the Question Task revealed support for the prediction that familiar target subjects would ask more total questions than would unfamiliar target subjects. The analysis failed to support the second prediction that familiar target conditions would produce a greater number of personality questions than would the unfamiliar target condition. Similarly, it was not supported that unfamiliar treatments would result in more background questions than familiar conditions. If anything, the means for the unfamiliar background question (M = 2.00) is less than that obtained for the familiar treatments (M = 4.15). Finally, the unpredicted main effect was observed that personality questions were asked more frequently regardless of subject condition.

Impression Task

The final dependent measure asked subjects to write a brief impression of the target's personality. It was predicted that the familiar condition would result in more extensive written impressions than would unfamiliar treatments. It was also predicted that familiar target subjects would represent more personality traits in their descriptions than would unfamiliar target subjects. Conversely, unfamiliar target subjects were expected to represent a greater proportion of background elements in their impressions.

As with the Question Task, the unit of analysis was the sentence. Elements of the written impressions were evaluated by four coders whose ratings were reduced to a composite score. Again, coders were blind to subject condition. Four hundred and twenty-five sentences were generated by the sixty subjects. Coders were unanimous in two hundred and fifty-six cases (60.2%). In one hundred and

sixteen ratings (27.3%), three of the four coders were in agreement. In forty-three judgments (10.1%), coders were split between two categories (with the tie-breaking procedure described previously employed), and in ten cases (2.4%), two coders agreed on the category with the other two selecting alternate categories. Scott's pi for the intercoder reliability of these ratings was .59 which falls somewhat below the range Krippendorff (1980) sets for "tentative acceptability."

For the analysis of the total number of elements written, all 425 coded elements were used. For the analysis of the proportion of evaluative and descriptive elements, only the first two categories were used (three hundred and thirty-eight of the written elements).[2]

The first prediction was that familiar treatments would result in more total written impressions than unfamiliar treatments. An analysis of the total number of elements written showed that familiar target subjects wrote more elements in their impressions than did unfamiliar treatments, $F\ (2,57) = 3.15$, $p < .05$. It should be noted, however, that the maximum difference among cells occurred between the familiar and the control condition, and not between the familiar and unfamiliar as expected. A supplementary analysis using the Student-Newman-Juels procedure establishes a range of 1.52 at the .05 level for grouping means; this indicated that the mean of the unfamiliar treatment did not differ significantly from either the familiar or the unfamiliar treatment. Means are presented in Table 3.

A second prediction was that familiar treatments would yield more Evaluative elements than unfamiliar treatments. A comparison of only elements which were rated in these two categories failed to show an interaction between the type of element and treatment condition, $F\ (2,57) = 0.69$, $p > .25$.

As with the Selection Task and Question Task, an unpredicted main effect was observed for the type of impression element written. Regardless of treatment, subjects were inclined to write evaluative appraisals, $F\ (1,57) = 156.26$, $p < .001$. Supplementary omega-square analysis indicated that this accounted for 57.06% of variance.

Table 3

IMPRESSION TASK: ELEMENTS WRITTEN BY CONDITION

Variable	Treatment Condition: Unfamiliar Target	Familiar Target	Control Target	Mean
Total Elements	7.05	7.95	6.30	7.10
Both & Neither	1.50	1.55	1.35	1.47
Adjusted Total	5.55	6.40	4.95	5.63
Descriptive	.70	.90	.65	.75
Evaluative	4.85	5.50	4.30	4.88

Notes on Table 3.

1. Both and Neither are the combined codings used to categorize elements which were either coded as being both "Descriptive & Evaluative" or not falling into any preceding category.

2. Adjusted total reflects on those elements which were categorized as "Descriptive" and "Evaluative."

In summary, the results from the Impression Task indicate that familiar target subjects do generate more written elements in their written impressions. The expected interaction between type of element and treatment condition was not supported. However, there was strong support for the unpredicted result that subjects tend to represent their written impressions along an "Evaluative" dimension rather than a "Descriptive" dimension regardless of treatment.

Personal Perception Questionnaire

Items on this instrument were intended as checks to study assumptions. Items #3 and #6 have already been reported. Item 1 asked subjects whether it was difficult for them to form impressions. No difference in reported diificulty was identi-

fied by treatment, F (2,57) = 0.75, $p > .40$. Item #2 asked subjects their confiedence of their impressions. Again, no difference by treatment was found, F (2,57) = 0.68, $p > .50$. Item #4 asked subjects their familiarity with the ethnic background of their target. It was expected that familiar treatments should differ from unfamiliar treatments on this item. This was supported, F (2,57) = 40.02, $p < .001$. As a followup to Item #4, Item #5 asked subjects to list the country of origin for their target. Unfamiliar condition subjects could not identify the country of origin (0.0%) while familiar condition subjects usually could (85% correct). Finally, subjects were asked to report their interest in actually meeting the target person. No difference was found to occur by condition, F (2,57) = 0.75, $p > .40$.

Summary of Results

There was limited support for the hypothesis that familiarity will result in the use of a broader range of constructs. Two of the three measures indicated that a person anticipating interaction with a familiar target generate a greater number elements preparation for an encounter (Question Task and Impression Task). The third measure, the Item Selection Task, while not significant, was in the predicted direction.

The results do not support the hypothesis that familiarity will orient a person towards more personality/evaluative elements than unfamiliar targets would. Instead, the analysis would indicate that target ethnic familiarity, per se, does not apparantly change the selection or processing of the types of impressions a person forms about another.

An unexpected finding through all three measures was a general tendency to prefer personality/evaluative elements regardless of their familiarity with the ethnic target. The occurrence of these main effects across all three dependent measures suggests that personality elements are more important in the anticipation of another than concrete background information.

Discussion

The hypotheses of the present study were not concerned with the content of subjects' constructs, per se. Rather, the initial concern was with the process by which persons form constructs in anticipation of interaction with another person. While the differentiation expected between familiar and unfamiliar subjects in their preference for type of information was not obtained, there is evidence from this research that subjects do differentiate between familiar and unfamiliar targets.

The prediction that familiar targets would generate more extensive constructs has some support. Familiar targets apparently caused subjects to generate more questions than did unfamiliar targets. While an alternate hypothesis might imply that familiar targets would have need of fewer questions, presumably because subjects already have sufficient information about them, the finding that subjects did ask more questions may be taken as evidence of their engaging a broader schema of the target.

Previous research has found evidence that we know or recall more about persons with whom we are familiar than those with whom we are unfamiliar. This should not be surprising because of the way they were constructed. These studies do not deal with the behavioroid measurement of anticipated interaction. Both Beach and Wertheimer (1961) and Fiske and Cox (1979) had subjects represent familiar and unfamiliar cases without any anticipation of interaction. From a communication perspective, the present study moves the application of the extensiveness of a cognitive schema to the realm of the general communication behaviors a person actually utilizes. The extensiveness of cognitive categories becomes translated into the behaviors preliminary to interaction.

Second, the procedures of the present study differ from the previous research in at least one important way. While Beach and Wertheimer (1961) and Fiske and Cox (1979) simply used references already present within their subjects' cognitive

repertoire, this research used referent targets outside of the subjects' personal experience. Fiske and Cox asked subjects to think of friends and strangers. Beach and Wertheimer asked subjects to provide descriptions of themselves, well-known others, and less well-known others. One should not be surprised that subjects knew more about themselves and friends. The current research extends this internal processing to the commonplace of what happens before we meet someone for the first time.

In real life we are often in the position where we are told we are going to meet someone before the initial encounter. As soon as we learn of the imminence of the upcoming encounter, we are likely to begin the anticipatory scan in preparation of the meeting. When the anticipated encounter involves someone whose characteristics can be categorized into pre-existing cognitive schema, it appears that it leads to greater inquiry and broader impressions of the target. If the anticiapted person is unknown to us and the limited information we have available does not easily fit within these pre-existing categories, it appears that we limit our inquiries and restrict our impressions of that person.

It may be that persons pay more attention to a person from a familiar background and have more potential categories to apply to the person. Consequently, we seek more information because we have more directions to explore. The extensiveness of the impression appears to reflect our engagement more extensive cognitive categories. Presumably, persons in the familiar treatments had more information. This is why they wrote more extensive impressions. Similarly, the results showing that they asked more questions may be taken as a greater amount of interest and attention.

While the results do not support a differentiation in the type of information we seek as a function of familiarity, it, nevertheless, does tend to indicate that differential attention does exist. At least one dimension of target salience may be taken to be the familiarity with which another person approaches us.

What is unknown from the present study is how subjects determine the salient features of the unfamiliar target. While the results indicate a difference in the total number of questions asked and elements written as being greater for the familiar target than for the unfamiliar, it is unknown to what features the subject directs his/her attention when the target is unfamiliar. Distinct from the possibility that subjects abstracted the ethnic target labels "Kashub" and "Walloon" into a general construct of "foreigner" or "Strange" or the like, is the alternate possibility that they ignored the ethnic reference altogether in preference to some other salient feature. An availability heuristic as suggested by Tversky and Kahneman (1973) would indicate that a person simply uses the most convenient attribute or trait which comes to his/her attention. If not ethnicity, then something else becomes the salient focal feature for the subject.

So while the present study does support that there is a difference in the amount of information generated from an ethnic target, it is uncertain how the subjects in the unfamiliar traetment condition actually regarded the unfamiliar target. The operationalization of the independent variable as a dimension of ethnic familiarity may only explain while a familiar target is salient; it is less adequate in explaining what happens to the intrapersonal processing of the person who is confronted with someone who is ethnically unfamiliar. It does not and cannot indicate whether the construct which is employed to represent the unfamiliar target is any less complete than the one employed for the familiar target.

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